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New York Hospitals Race to Train Staff to Handle Rising Coronavirus Cases

By: Katie Honan

New York City's public hospitals are retraining medical workers as they rush to boost staff to treat patients with the novel coronavirus, according to an email sent to employees at Bellevue Hospital and officials. The employees are being asked to volunteer to take on more shifts and would be trained and directly supervised by specialists during each shift, which would include triage and assessment of respiratory conditions in patients, triaging patients with respiratory issues, and treating Covid-19 patients, according to the email viewed by The Wall Street Journal.

Hospitals have positioned clinicians, including specialists, surgeons and ambulatory care physicians, to be prepared to help with intensive-care unit and emergency room shifts, said a spokesman for NYC Health + Hospitals, which operates the public hospitals and clinics in New York City. "NYC Health + Hospitals is utilizing all strategies to meet the challenging and ever-changing needs of Covid-19 safely," said the spokesman, Christopher Miller.

The larger roster of workers is ramping up in all of the acute care facilities at the hospital corporation's 11 hospitals and 60 additional patient-care sites, an H+H official said. Staff who are credentialed to work anywhere in the system are being redirected where they are most needed, the official said. New York City has emerged as [the center of the crisis](#) in the U.S., with [more than 10,000 confirmed cases](#) and 99 deaths as of Sunday night, officials said. Hospitals are struggling to staff emergency rooms and are also facing [an equipment shortage](#).

Mayor Bill de Blasio said in a television interview Monday that the city's hospitals would likely run out of needed equipment like respirators by the end of the week. "I can only guarantee you right now that we can get through this week with the equipment and supplies we have," he said on CNN.

For staffing, the city has activated its reserve of medical professionals, which has 9,000 people. An additional 1,000 retired and private-practice doctors and nurses signed up last week to help. Mr. de Blasio said they could also recruit medical students with proper credentials to help.

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